

New probe into JFK's death urged

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WASHINGTON — Castigating the CIA and FBI for withholding evidence of Fidel Castro death plots, Warren Commission counsel David W. Belin Saturday urged a reopening of the commission's investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Belin, in the past a consistent opponent of reopening the probe, was one of two Warren Commission attorneys who concentrated on determining who killed Kennedy and Dallas policeman J. D. Tippitt on Nov. 22, 1963.

Belin, 47, a Des Moines attorney, also headed the Rockefeller Commission's recent investigation of CIA activities.

In a lengthy statement released on

the 12th anniversary of the assassination, Belin expressed confidence that a new investigation would substantiate the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman who killed both men and that there was no conspiracy in the assassination.

He said a new investigation is necessary, however, to restore the public's faith in the Warren Commission report and in the federal government. He suggested it also might "shed additional light" on Oswald's motive for shooting Kennedy.

Belin's comments will give new impetus to a drive for reopening of the assassination probe, a move advocated recently by Sen. Richard S. Schweiker.

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R.Pa., chairman of a Senate subcommittee on intelligence looking into conspiracy theories in the assassination.

Schweiker, predicting the Warren Commission report would collapse "like a house of cards," said two theories being investigated are that Kennedy was killed through a Communist plot organized in Cuba or the Soviet Union, or the anti-Castro Cubans, angry over diminishing Kennedy administration support for them, planned the murder.

Belin said Congress should conduct any new investigation and "should specifically investigate why this deviation of duty on the part of both the CIA and the FBI occurred."

In addition to withholding from the Warren Commission evidence of CIA plots to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, Belin said, the FBI failed to disclose to the commission evidence of threats made to the FBI by Oswald several days before the assassination.

Belin told the Los Angeles Times, "the ramifications of the withholding of evidence by the FBI and CIA are horrendous when you consider that they were withholding it from a presidential commission."

"When will they not withhold information when it suits their convenience?" he continued. "This deserves wide public concern."

Since evidence shows that the late Robert F. Kennedy, as attorney general, also knew of the Castro death plots, Belin said, he too should have notified the commission.

A book by Belin on the assassination, "November 22, 1963: You Are the Jury," published in 1973, quotes a letter from Commission Chairman Earl Warren to Robert Kennedy which asks

If he has any additional information pertinent to the inquiry. In a reply just before the commission wound up its work, Kennedy wrote that "all information relating in any way" to the assassination had been given to the commission.

Although no evidence has surfaced to link the Castro death plots to the Kennedy assassination, the fact that such plots existed is considered by Belin, Sen. Schweiker and others who have studied the assassination probe to be a pertinent area for inquiry. And so far that area of inquiry has received little official attention.

Belin said he also could not understand why the one Warren Commission member who had knowledge of the Castro assassination plots — ex-CIA Director Allen Dulles — failed to bring them to the attention of other commission members and the commission staff.

Dulles and their other members have died since the seven-member commission's report was issued in 1964. Others who have since died are former Chief Justice Warren, Sen. Richard B. Russell, D-Ga., and House Majority Leader Hale Boggs, D-La.

Other members were President Ford, who at the time of the report was House minority leader; John Sherman Cooper, a Somerset, Ky., attorney who at the time was a Republican senator; and John J. McCloy, a New York banker who had served as President Kennedy's chief disarmament adviser and who had been a member of the Coordinating Committee on the Cuban Crisis.

In the past Ford has opposed reopening the investigation. No member of the commission has ever spoken in favor of such a move.

Belin said that while serving as

executive director of the Rockefeller Commission, he asked former CIA Director John W. McCone why he had failed to inform the Warren Commission of the Castro assassination plots.

He said McCone replied that he had assumed Dulles would bring the information to the attention of other commission members since Dulles had been CIA director at the time the plots were hatched.

Belin also quoted McCone as saying that he knew nothing of the plots until informed of them by another CIA official, Richard Helms, in August 1963 and that it was his understanding that any consideration of assassination of Castro by the CIA had been terminated in 1961.

In a report issued Thursday, the Senate Committee on Intelligence concluded that Helms had not notified McCone of the plot until August 1963,

"and did so then in a manner which indicated that the plot had been terminated before McCone became director."

The committee, which severely criticized Helms, found that the plots continued until 1965.

Belin also disclosed that he has filed requests under the Freedom of Information Act with the CIA and the National Archives for all information and material in their possession pertaining to the Kennedy assassination, including the autopsy photographs and x-rays.

Belin also called for the National News Council "or some other appropriate forum of the media" to make an in-depth study of the adequacy of the media's continuing coverage of the Kennedy assassination.

The News Council is a group sponsored by some segments of the media to monitor media performance.